West Contra Costa Unified School District

STRATEGIC PLAN
2013-2018

DRAFT

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West Contra Costa Unified School District faces all of the challenges and dilemmas of urban school districts in California, and more. The issues of high poverty and large numbers of English learners are accompanied by a history of budget problems and a diverse student population residing in five different cities. Nevertheless, the District has made progress in recent years, increasing student achievement, paying off a state loan and cultivating community partnerships that bring resources and a new sense of hopefulness.

With the education landscape rapidly changing as a result of, among other things, the implementation of the Common Core, adoption of the Local Control Funding Formula, and expansion of Linked Learning, the District leadership understands this is an opportune time to engage stakeholders in the development and implementation of a new strategic plan.

The Strategic Plan that follows comes at a critical time for the District and the community. The previous strategic plan, written in 2006, ran its course and is now outdated. There are many great initiatives and programs operating in the District, but without a current and focused plan to create a shared vision and implementation strategy, these programs and the District will fall short of their potential. This unmet potential directly and negatively impacts student outcomes: the achievement gap, though narrowed in recent years, still persists and is far from being eliminated. In a community as diverse and complex as West County, closing the achievement gap and supporting all students to succeed is of the utmost importance. The WCCUSD Strategic Plan is a five-year actionable blueprint designed to focus, enable, and empower the district and its stakeholders to address this challenge and become a district of choice.

The strategic planning process was led by a community-based Steering Committee, a collection of 20 diverse individuals each representing a vital stakeholder group, and facilitated by a team of consultants paid for through a generous grant from Chevron. The planning process centered on a robust and bilingual community engagement effort. Over the course of six months, the process included 45 one-on-one interviews, 30 focus groups, eight town hall meetings, a series of student discussions, and online and paper surveys; more than 2,100 individuals were able to weigh in regarding the District's and community's needs and priorities.

The community engagement effort provided a clear and comprehensive understanding of the District's primary strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Of the challenges identified, seven stood out from the list:

1. **Achievement gap** – The District's African-American and Latino students, particularly the males, far underperform their White, Asian and Filipino counterparts.
2. **Lack of program alignment** – There are numerous successful initiatives and programs operating within the District, but there is little coordination between the efforts.
3. **Low trust** – Internally and externally, far too many individuals and organizations assume the worst of the district, bringing an unhealthy level of skepticism into every District initiative and interaction.
4. **Poor communication** – Without a clear vision and a defined communications strategy, the District is unable to communicate effectively with its internal or external stakeholders.

5. **No sense of urgency –** Though many within the District want to see change, there is little sense of urgency to see that change happen now.
6. **Insufficient professional development for teachers –** Teachers in the District are not receiving the support and development they need to become great teachers.
7. **Weak talent recruitment and retention –** The District is unable to recruit or retain top talent, especially at the principal level, which inhibits instruction and management, and negatively impacts school culture.

To address these critical hurdles, six key priorities were identified:

1. **Create high expectations –** It is not sufficient to believe that every student *can* succeed; the District and community (and the students themselves) should expect that every student *will* succeed.
2. **Support quality instruction** – Teachers should have the support and training needed to become great teachers.
3. **Embrace collective ownership –** Every stakeholder group has an opportunity and responsibility to play a role in promoting student success.
4. **Invest in the whole child –** Student success is not limited to classroom performance; social and emotional development are necessary complements to academic achievement.
5. **Transparency and accountability** – The community should be able to understand what is happening in the District and hold the District and its leaders accountable for success.
6. **Innovate –** Doing things the way they have always been done is insufficient; the District should look to best practices and cutting edge innovations to help prepare its students for the 21st century.

The following Strategic Plan lays out a path that will no doubt be difficult. Implementation will require the dedication, leadership, and cooperation of all of the District's stakeholder groups. The good news is that the Strategic Plan engagement process demonstrated a willingness and desire on the part of the entire community—students, parents, teachers, administrators, classified employees, business leaders, nonprofits, funders, and the public-at-large—to engage with the District's challenges, commit to solutions, and dream big. Everyone is focused on the same goal of success for all WCCUSD students; now everyone must work together to build a District capable of achieving the community's dreams.

WCCUSD's strategic planning process was collaborative and deliberate. Over the course of 10 months, the process set a new standard for comprehensive community engagement, bringing to the table stakeholders who collectively could provide a 360° perspective of the school district and its possibilities. Those insightful and passionate perspectives, along with best practices from around the country, formed the backbone of the 2013-2018 WCCUSD Strategic Plan.

The strategic planning process was overseen by a five-person Advisory Committee comprised of two School Board members, the Superintendent, the Associate Superintendent, and a representative from Chevron Corporation, the funder for the project. A 20-person Steering Committee was formed to drive the strategic plan and to provide insight and feedback at key milestones throughout the process. Steering Committee members represented many of WCCUSD's vital partners and stakeholders: district leaders; teachers; principals; United Teachers of Richmond; Public Employees Local 1; Mechanics Bank; San Francisco State University; Richmond Community Foundation; Building Blocks for Kids; Chevron Corporation; Faithworks; NAACP; Irene Scully Foundation; Contra Costa College; California Office to Reform Education (CORE); Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory; and City of Richmond. Two consulting firms – Third Plateau Social Impact Strategies and Capitol Impact – teamed to facilitate the strategic planning process, synthesize the findings, and author the final document.

The strategic planning process consisted of five distinct, sequential phases:
1. Fact Finding – a review of the district's former strategic documents and data to develop a deeper understanding of the district's history and past performance.
2. Community Engagement (A) – a comprehensive bilingual outreach effort that saw 2,104 individuals take part through a series of six community town halls (one for each high school family), one teacher and administrator town hall, one classified employee town hall, 45 one-on-one interviews, 30 specialized focus groups, an online survey for teachers and administrators, a separate online survey for the general public, and a series of student discussions and interviews.
3. Analysis, Synthesis, and Drafting – an in-depth review of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 findings to identify the common themes, critical hurdles, and promising opportunities facing the district, brought together into an initial draft.
4. Community Engagement (B) – a second round of stakeholder feedback based on the draft created in Phase 3, inviting stakeholders to voice their opinions during two community town halls, one teacher and administrator town hall, a handful of one-on-one interviews, and an online forum.
5. Finalization and Board Approval – a second (final) round of incorporating stakeholder feedback, then creating the finalized strategic plan and presenting it to the Board for approval and implementation.

The resulting plan is a document that is rooted in reality, addresses the core needs of the community, and provides an actionable blueprint to foster student success.

Student success is the ultimate priority

The purpose of public education is to develop well-informed, intellectually and emotionally capable students, equipped with the skills and knowledge to be successful, happy, and productive members of society. All students, regardless of racial, ethnic or socio-economic background, should receive comparable skill development and exposure to be in a position to determine their life trajectory.

Though individual student success will vary, the level of opportunity presented to each student should be the same and students' awareness of those opportunities should be constant. School is a place for students to feel supported, safe, and have the confidence and ability to take on new opportunities.

Confronting reality

Many students in West Contra Costa are underperforming, under-supported and unprepared. The achievement gap between white students and students of color persists, and district-wide there is an urgent need to dramatically increase and improve student learning.

In the district, the California High School Exit Exam (CHASEE) pass rate for white students is just 77%, and only 55% of African American students who take the same exam earn a passing score. The percentage of Latino students who pass the exam is only slightly higher at 67%.

For a district that is over 70% African American and Latino, the vast majority of whom qualify for free-and-reduced lunch, the low success rate of students of color is alarming.

Comparing API scores at the school level also reveals disparity. Kennedy High School most recently received a score of 518, almost 200 points lower than Hercules High School's ranking. But the gap forms much earlier. Kensington Elementary earned a 956 API ranking as compared to Edward M. Downer Elementary which received a 677. The demographics of the students at the district's underperforming schools confirm that students of color are not receiving a high quality education.

The district overall has made great strides in recent years, most notably the repayment of the 1991 state loan, but the level of student achievement is far below where it can, and should, be.

Diversity as a strength and a challenge

The diversity of WCCUSD is undeniably a strength, challenging individuals to think in new ways and work well with others. The district is in a unique position to capitalize on a diverse learning environment and better prepare students for an increasingly diverse, global world.

But diversity can also be a challenge. Multiple races and ethnicities can result in cultural and language barriers, as well as prejudice and racism. Range in parent and family members' education, employment and income levels affect their ability to support and supplement their child's education and development.

Education cannot be one-size-fits-all; learning is customized by student, classroom, school and community. The range in access to resources in the District – the haves and have-nots – impacts the means by which schools are able to create unique educational and development opportunities for students; inequity ensues.

The stark difference in API scores by school stems from many variables including teacher quality and development, principal experience, parent involvement and support, broader community engagement, and other socio-economic factors. Gaps form due to inequitable access to resources, and widen when those inequalities are not addressed.

Focus on what matters
At the district and school level, action steps and initiatives have been developed to address the problem, but there is little consensus on the long-term goal. There are many stakeholder groups engaged in the issues, but without district-wide vision, initiatives and partners operate independent of one another, creating inefficiency, and ultimately, falling short of their potential to further student success.

Evidence of success
The single, most important determinant of whether the Strategic Plan has been effectively implemented by all district stakeholders is student success. Success is when all students are provided with meaningful academic, social, and emotional growth opportunities; students are aware of their options; and all students are prepared and supported to pursue their interests and achieve their goals.

Strategic Plan
The Strategic Plan has been created to re-establish district vision, inspire a culture of change, and guide WCCUSD's strategic decisions. The potential end result of coordinated stakeholder efforts far surpasses the result of a district working independent of partners. The plan requires all stakeholders work together to further student success.

The Strategic Plan is organized in a way that addresses the three places, broadly defined, where students need to be supported: in the classroom, in the school, and in the community. "In the classroom" refers to direct teacher actions and expectations of student learning. "In the school" encompasses administrative leadership, school-wide culture, and supplemental support services such as counseling and food programs. "In the community" starts in the home- the actions and expectations of parents and family members- and expands to neighborhoods and cities where local organizations and businesses provide key partnerships and support.

Mission

A revision of WCCUSD's mission statement re-focuses key priorities and partnerships. Providing a high quality education goes beyond the walls of the classroom and integrates real-world learning experiences that require students to utilize social and intellectual skills. Increasingly, educational leaders recognize students' social-emotional development and overall wellness are critical to academic and personal success.

The school and District staff cannot do it alone. There are many individuals, organizations, and businesses in the community working toward West Contra Costa student success. The District values these partners and is committed to creating and maintaining strong partnerships through coordination, collaboration and communication.

Mission Statement:

> ***WCCUSD, in partnership with the community, serves the whole child, empowering every student to succeed in higher education, career, and life by pairing high quality academics with social, emotional, and wellness support.***

Vision

The vision statement frames the District's mindset and solidifies long-term goals. The District vows to never be stagnant, to be constantly reflecting on successes and failures in order to re-define and refine best practices to better serve students.

To continue to raise the bar for District-wide student achievement, all parties must be engaged and encouraged to celebrate successes and voice constructive criticism. District leaders set the tone for an inclusive community where all are supported, heard, and empowered to do their best work.

Vision Statement:

> ***WCCUSD envisions a school district that continuously sets and meets high expectations; embraces challenges and innovative solutions; supports its teachers and employees whole-heartedly; builds a community with shared values and buy-in; and above all, prepares every student to succeed in all facets of education and life.***

Values

All of the District's decisions and actions are rooted in core beliefs about student achievement; what defines student success and the necessary components. The listed values reflect the mindset District leadership, educators, employees, program partners, and all stakeholders, are expected to embody and instill in students.

Values:

Student Success
Student success, in the classroom and in life, is at the forefront of everything we do. WCCUSD strives to equip all students, children and adults, with the academic, social and emotional skills necessary for success.

Collective Ownership
WCCUSD believes all stakeholders – students, teachers, employees, partners and community members - are fundamental to creating and maintaining safe and effective learning environments. In order to provide every student with a high quality education WCCUSD relies on continuous participation and feedback from stakeholders.

High Expectations
WCCUSD believes that every student can succeed at a high level and expects them to excel in the classroom, in career, and in life. Similarly, the District expects all stakeholders to operate at the highest level and to continuously seek out the best strategies and processes to ensure District-wide success.

Accountability
The District is dedicated to fostering a culture of transparency and maintaining open lines of communication that are engaging, informative and accessible. WCCUSD recognizes that data and metrics are essential for effective decision making.

Leadership
WCCUSD is committed to developing classroom, school and community leaders with the vision and skill set to execute the district's mission.

Quality Instruction
Quality educators facilitate growth, set and achieve ambitious goals and advance student learning. WCCUSD believes standards-based curriculum, data tracking and analysis drive student achievement and empower educators to innovate and collaborate to identify best practices. Rigorous training, support, and development for educators strengthen teacher effectiveness and accelerate student achievement.

Diversity
WCCUSD celebrates the diversity of West Contra Costa and values the strength in varying perspectives, beliefs and backgrounds.

A comprehensive analysis of WCCUSD's key Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) provides insight into the District's areas of opportunity and potential challenges moving forward.

The below SWOT analysis was grounded in stakeholder feedback gathered through extensive community engagement: 45 one-on-one interviews, 30 focus groups, eight town halls, and 831 surveys, 191 of which were conducted in Spanish. Students, parents, teachers, school and district staff, district leaders, community members, businesses and community-based organizations all offered their perspective on the District.

Aggregating and analyzing their reflections and insights resulted in the following:

STRENGTHS

Staff and faculty passion	From administrators to teachers to school staff, almost everyone in the district is passionate about student success.
Diversity	The district serves and represents a community that boasts phenomenal diversity, in terms of demographics, socio-economic standing, experiences, and perspectives.
Constituent support	As evidenced by the passing of numerous school bonds and the presence of dozens of highly-engaged stakeholder groups, the district has a strong support base.
Facilities	The district and its community have successfully leveraged a large bond program to ensure strong school facilities.
Perseverance	The district leadership and staff have shown great perseverance in advancing the district despite continual budget cuts.
District and classroom "rockstars"	The strong individuals at the district-, school- and classroom-level are exceptionally strong.
Whole-child initiatives	In order to better support and develop the whole child, the district has implemented initiatives such as the School-Based Health Centers and Full Service Community Schools that have positively impacted students' social, emotional, and academic learning.

Additional District strengths include: strong civic partnerships; a commitment to responsible financial management; and the ability to effectively manage and coordinate several constituency groups.

WEAKNESSES

Achievement gap

The district's African-American and Latino students, particularly the males, far underperform their White, Asian and Filipino counterparts.

Poor communication

Without a clear vision and a defined communications strategy, the District is unable to communicate effectively with its internal or external stakeholders.

Lack of data tracking and reporting

Data is necessary to make informed decisions, but the District's current data tracking and reporting practices are insufficient.

Weak talent recruitment and retention

The district is unable to recruit or retain top talent, especially at the principal level, which inhibits instructions and management and negatively impacts school culture.

Lack of leadership pipeline

The district lacks a set process by which to identify and develop leaders, a problem that is amplified by the school board's high turnover rate.

Insufficient professional development for teachers

Teachers in the district are not receiving the support and development they need to become great teachers. Lack of development and training negatively impacts instruction, curriculum development, teacher collaboration, and student achievement.

Lack of parent involvement

Systems have not been established to ensure consistent communication with parents or provide ongoing opportunities for families to be present at their children's schools and engaged with their education.

Inadequate college counseling

Current college counseling resources and strategies across the district are insufficient and unable to properly and fully guide students into and through higher education.

Additional weaknesses include: large class sizes; antiquated processes (especially in regards to human resources); and the district's annual retirement liability.

OPPORTUNITIES

Look to best practices	There is no reason for WCCUSD to reinvent the wheel on issues and initiatives that have proven best practices within and/or outside the district.
Mission articulation, alignment, and buy-in	A unifying mission and vision will align all of the moving pieces within the district and provide clear structure on the ways in which stakeholders can engage.
Innovation and experimentation	The district would benefit immensely from a culture of innovation and experimentation, one in which the district does not shy away from difficult issues or settle for the status quo.
Data	If the district can capture and objectively analyze school and district-wide data, district and school leadership will be able to make more informed and strategic decisions.
Linked learning	Linked learning programs engage the business community and provide experiential learning opportunities for students.
Stronger teacher professional development	A stronger professional development program for teachers will enhance teacher leadership opportunities and lead to greater student success and higher teacher retention.
Early childhood education	System-wide student success requires early access and intervention.
Student voice and leadership development	If students' interests are represented, their voices encouraged, and they have opportunities to be leaders in their schools and communities, students will be invested in their academic success.
Leverage local community	Local businesses, funders, civic partners, and community-based organizations hold great potential for complementing the District's work supporting students' educational, emotional, and social needs.
School-site empowerment	With the right balance of school autonomy and district-run streamlined processes, school leaders will be able to make faster, smarter, and more effective decisions at their school sites.

Additional opportunities include: integrating Common Core standards; technology improvements; developing a strategic dual immersion plan; scaling the Full-Service Community Schools model; and improving communication and alignment with community college partners.

THREATS

Lack of Program Alignment	There are numerous successful programs operating within the district, but there is little coordination between the efforts. Lack of alignment leads to poor investments, miscommunication, and ineffectiveness.
Low expectations	Expectations frame the conversation about what the district can and should accomplish. Currently, the expectations are far too low, with many individuals inside and outside the district viewing student failure (especially among African-American and Latino boys) as a foregone conclusion.
No sense of urgency	Though many within the district want to see change, there is little sense of urgency to see that change happen now. Until there is true motivation to enact change, the status quo mindset will prevail.
Little accountability	Without more accountability at the board-, leadership-, and school-level, the system will continue to see programs with weak deliverables and poor outcomes. Transparent decision-making processes will improve communication and increase trust and stakeholder buy-in.
Low Trust	Internally and externally, far too many individuals and organizations assume the worst of the district, bringing an unhealthy level of skepticism into every district initiative and interaction.
"White Flight"	In any district where performance and student success lag, the wealthiest and most resourceful will find alternative education options, including private schools and more successful public school districts. In WCCUSD, this is most prevalent in the wealthier Caucasian community.
Budget Cuts	In a financially-strapped state, budget cuts are a constant concern.

Additional threats to the district include: employees stretched too thin; resistance to innovative thinking; summer learning loss; decreasing AP enrollment; and insufficient and outdated HR policies.

The preceding SWOT analysis outlines WCCUSD's accomplishments and impact on students, as well as obstacles to overcome. Being candid about these hurdles is necessary for the district to realize its vision (see page 6) and dramatically increase positive student outcomes. It is important to note, however, that all weaknesses and threats in the SWOT analysis are not created equal; seven should be prioritized, as they represent the root causes of the majority of the district's challenges:

1. **Achievement gap –** The district's African-American and Latino students, particularly the males, far underperform their White, Asian and Filipino counterparts.
2. **Lack of program alignment –** There are numerous successful programs operating within the district, but there is little coordination between the efforts. Lack of alignment leads to poor investments, miscommunication, and ineffectiveness.
3. **Low trust –** Internally and externally, far too many individuals and organizations assume the worst of the district, bringing an unhealthy level of skepticism into every district initiative and interaction.
4. **Poor communication –** Without a clear vision and a defined communications strategy, the district is unable to communicate effectively with its internal or external stakeholders.
5. **No sense of urgency –** Though many within the district want to see change, there is little sense of urgency to see that change happen now. Until there is true motivation and collective action to enact change, the status quo will prevail.
6. **Insufficient professional development for teachers –** Teachers in the district are not receiving the support and development they need to become great teachers. Lack of development and training negatively impacts instruction, curriculum development, teacher collaboration, and student achievement.
7. **Weak talent recruitment and retention –** The district is unable to recruit or retain top talent, especially at the principal level, which inhibits instruction and management, and negatively impacts school culture.

To address these seven critical hurdles, WCCUSD identifies six key priorities to pursue over the next five years. Those six key priorities are:
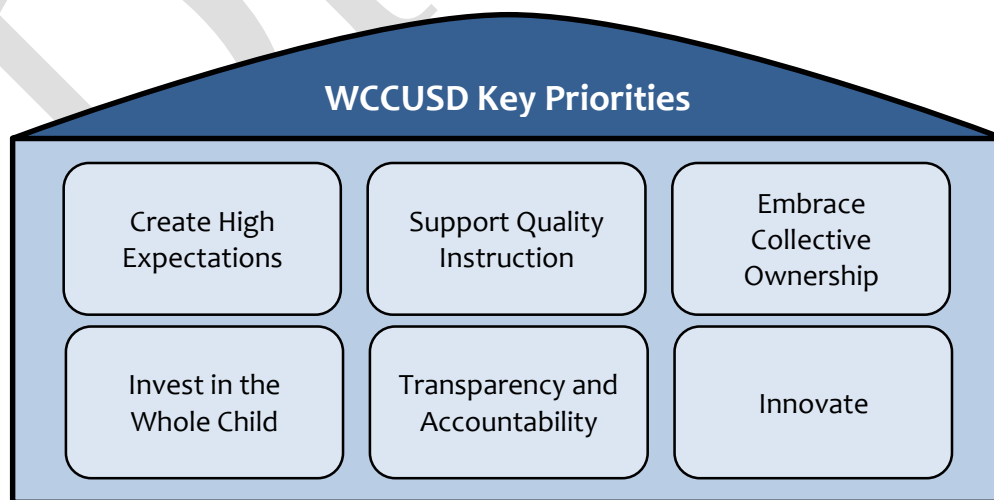
Each of these six key priorities is designed to address specific critical hurdles, as the chart below illustrates:

		WCCUSD Key Priorities				
		Create high expectations	Support quality instruction	Embrace collective ownership	Invest in the whole child	Transparency and accountability	Innovate
WCCUSD Critical Hurdles	Achievement gap	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
	Lack of program alignment	◆	◆	◆	◆		◆
	Low trust	◆		◆		◆	
	Poor communication			◆		◆	
	No sense of urgency	◆			◆	◆	
	Insufficient professional development for teachers	◆	◆				◆
	Weak talent recruitment and retention	◆	◆				◆

A detailed blueprint for how to execute each of these six key priorities is included in the following section, which provides specific objectives and tactics for each priority, along with an accompanying implementation timeline, budget implication, and level of importance.

Priority #1: Create High Expectations

Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
Objective 1: Communicate high expectations: college and career ready			
1.1: Define College and Career Ready. WCCUSD should partner with Contra Costa College, the Ed Fund's West County College Access Network, and other community stakeholders to create a college and career ready policy, articulating exactly what it means to be "college and career ready" at each grade level.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Medium
1.2 Frame School as an Opportunity. At every school and in every grade, students should be answering the question "What is your dream?" Teachers should begin the school year with a more formal process by which students can identify and record their aspirations. To the extent possible, these responses should be maintained and follow the students as they matriculate, keeping the students' goals fresh on their mind and hammering home the message that education is their opportunity to attain their goals. Teachers and principals should be able to talk about their students' dreams and make their lessons relevant by tying them to their students' dreams.	2014-2015	None	Low
Objective 2: Challenge students to think beyond the test			
2.1 Continue to Expand the District's Linked Learning Initiative. The District has already adopted and invested in Linked Learning, but it can do more. The District should increase its outreach into the business community to expand its internship offering, opening the door to all students having work-based learning opportunities and challenging students to apply the knowledge they acquire in the classroom in a professional setting.	Ongoing	Minimal (staffing)	High
2.2. Infuse Critical Thinking and Leadership into the Student Experience. By creating opportunities for exploration, challenging students to think critically, and empowering students to teach and learn from their peers, students will have a greater sense of ownership over their education.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Medium

In the classroom

Priority #1: Create High Expectations *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
	Objective 3: Implement Common Core at all grade levels			
	3.1: Continue Implementation of Common Core at all grade levels.	Ongoing	Moderate (staffing)	High
	3.2: Educate Parents and Community About Implementation. The District has already and should continue to create opportunities to educate parents and the wider community about the adoption and implementation of the Common Core standards. Possible means for sharing information about Common Core include community-wide town halls, smaller school meetings, letters and other materials sent home through students, email and phone messaging, and regular website updates.	Ongoing through entire transition process	Minimal (staffing)	High
	Objective 4: Emphasize pre-K through 3rd grade to rapidly bring student performance to grade level			
In the classroom	**4.1: Stress to Parents the Importance of Early Exposure to Reading and Vocabulary**. The District should work to communicate with all parents to reach students earlier, emphasizing the importance of early exposure to reading and vocabulary. The District can reach parents through its current operational communication channels, but it should also actively seek to partner with community organizations already working with these parents.	2014-2015	Variable	Low
	4.2: Phase in Extended-Day Kindergarten. The District should develop a realistic plan to phase in extended-day Kindergarten to all District students, starting with the elementary schools in the school families with the lowest performing high schools. By essentially doubling the amount of time students spend in Kindergarten, WCCUSD will be able to provide significant academic support at the outset and set the students on the course toward success and achievement.	2015-2016	Substantial	High

Priority #1: Create High Expectations *(continued)*

Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
4.3: Partner With Local Preschools to Align Preschool Curricula with District Standards. The District should partner with local preschools to establish a set of guidelines for preschool curricula. While the District can't enforce curricular standards, the District and preschools should open lines of communication so that the District can clearly articulate which skills it hopes students possess when entering Kindergarten and preschools can receive curriculum development support.	2015-2016	Minimal (staffing)	Low
4.4: Provide Preschool for All. While the District has invested significant resources in its transitional kindergarten program, WCCUSD would benefit significantly by building out a comprehensive preschool program. This would enable the District to reach its student population earlier and work with them to develop the skills necessary for success in K-12. Although this is not a realistic option at the moment, the District should revisit the possibility of preschool for all toward the tail-end of this strategic plan.	2017-2018	Substantial	Medium
4.5: Establish a Relationship With Local Libraries to Get Students Visiting and Reading Early On. The District should reach out to the Contra Costa County Library to develop a strategic partnership to support student literacy.	2014-2015	Minimal	Low
Objective 5: Put every student on the path to graduate high school with opportunity for post-secondary education			
5.1: Provide A-G Counseling to All Students Entering 8th Grade. To better increase the chance of high school success, the District should begin counseling students toward college before they arrive at high school. By arming all students with the information they need to succeed and a clear understanding of what is expected of them, students will enter high school at an advantage compared to students unfamiliar with the A-G requirements.	2014-2015 (pilot) 2015-2016 (roll out)	Moderate (staffing)	High

(In the classroom)

Priority #1: Create High Expectations *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
In the classroom	**5.2: Implement the Transcript Evaluation Service to Track Students.** The District should utilize software to track student progress against A-G requirements. This will make it easier for counselors to communicate with students about their progress and identify any existing or potential problems with students fulfilling the A-G requirements.	2014-2015	Moderate (technology); Potential long-term savings due to efficiencies in counselor time	Medium
	5.3: Provide CAHSEE Support. As long as the CAHSEE is a graduation requirement, the District should continue to offer and expand its CAHSEE support to students to ensure that all high school students who have met their high school course requirements pass the CAHSEE.	2014-2015	Minimal	Medium
	Objective 6: Infuse the schools with a college-going culture			
In the school	**6.1: Start Regular College Tours in Elementary School**. The District should strategically expose all students to college by providing class field trips to visit college campuses. By introducing students to college starting in elementary school, the District can make the dream of going to college more real and tangible. Wherever possible, invite parents to attend these field trips, as well.	2014-2015 (develop college tour curriculum) 2015-2016 (roll out)	Moderate (staffing, travel)	Medium
	6.2: Refer to Each Class as the Graduating Class of 20XX. By calling each class by the year of their expected 4-year college graduation, the District will effectively communicate to students that (1) their educational path does not stop at high school and (2) the District believes that they can and will graduate from a 4-year college.	2014-2015	None	Low

Priority #1: Create High Expectations *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
In the school	**6.3: Post College Pennants Representing Alumni Alma Maters**. To celebrate success, the District should encourage schools to post college pennants for each college in which one of their graduates enrolls. By putting up the pennant, the District will be asking students to leave their mark on the school in a positive way. Over time, pennants will cover the walls of the District's high schools, each with a story of a student success for administrators, teachers, parents, and students to point to as an example for themselves, their students, and their children.	2014-2015	None	Low
	6.4: Post College Acceptance Letters. Similar to 6.3, the District should encourage high schools to prominently post copies of college acceptance letters received by high school seniors. As the spring comes, the main halls of each high school will be covered with acceptance letters, communicating the strong norm of the school's college-going culture.	2014-2015	None	Low
	6.5: Build College-Going Vocabulary For All Students Beginning In Kindergarten. Teachers should be encouraged and supported to use college-going vocabulary (e.g., university, acceptance, major, minor, etc.) throughout K-12 to build comfort with and demystify the idea of higher education. This vocabulary can be used informally during classroom discussions or more formally in the curriculum (e.g., spelling vocabulary).	2014-2015	None	Low
	6.6: Encourage Teachers to Celebrate Their Alma Maters. Teachers should be in encouraged to represent their alma maters by decorating their classrooms and wearing college apparel. By tying college to the students' understanding of their teacher's identity and demonstrating the fun and excitement of college, teachers can support the creation and development of the school's college-going culture.	2014-2015	None	Low

Priority #1: Create High Expectations *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
	Objective 7: Empower students to recognize their ability			
In the school	**7.1: Teach All Students to Self-Advocate**. The District should empower students to advocate for their individual and collective interests in order to get them to buy into and share ownership in their academic success. The District should examine its slate of extra-curricular activities and leadership classes, two of the primary areas where this student advocacy is learned and nurtured, to see how it can better support teachers, coaches, and other involved community members in their work. This may involve the creation of additional activities, teacher professional development, or other yet-to-be-determined supports.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High
	7.2: Establish Male and Female Leadership Cohorts. The District should establish Male and Female Leadership Cohorts in its middle and high schools to cultivate student leaders. To start, the District should learn from the models established at Long Beach Unified School District, Sacramento City Unified School District, and Fresno Unified School District and consider piloting the program at one or two high schools.	2014-2015 (study models) 2015-2016 (pilot)	Minimal (staffing)	Medium
	7.3: Implement Meaningful Leadership Development. The District should develop and deploy a leadership development curriculum to be piloted with high school leadership classes. Assuming its efficacy, the District should consider implementing the curriculum across the entire student body.	2014-2015 (develop curriculum) 2015-2016 (pilot)	Minimal (staffing)	High
	7.4: Make Leadership Classes Meaningful. WCCUSD should work to make the high school leadership classes more substantive. These classes should move beyond planning parties and rallies, and be used to train student leaders. To unify and empower the District's student voice, the District should facilitate the collaboration of leadership classes across schools through summits, school site visits, and other cross-school team building and bonding opportunities.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Low

West Contra Costa Unified SCHOOL DISTRICT

Priority #1: Create High Expectations *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
In the school	**7.5: Create Formal Process To Listen to Students**. The District should create a formal student focus group and town hall program to enable the District to get unfiltered and honest student feedback about their educational experience. The District should schedule regular quarterly student focus groups or town halls and host the meetings at different schools throughout the year. Teachers, school-site administrators, central office administrators, and external partners should be asked to participate and listen to the students and the District should summarize the meeting content and circulate to the School Board.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High
	Objective 8: Provide students with meaningful college and career counseling			
	8.1: Streamline Basic Information Dissemination Processes. Some percentage of the current counseling workload does not require a 1-on-1 format because it is not individualized. Basic and general information regarding topics like A-G requirements, standardized testing, and the college application process should be automated and/or streamlined to free up counselor time. This could occur through assemblies, printed checklists and tips, and online resources. Additionally, where appropriate, counselors should provide non-sensitive counseling support in groups. Counselors should seek to limit the amount of time they are providing repetitive advice.	2014-2015	None; Potential savings in counselor time	Medium
	8.2: Study Targeted Counseling Services. Because counseling time is at a premium, the District should design a study to analyze which counseling services are most valuable. The study should consider whether certain services are more effective if offered to certain demographics and/or at certain times during a student's tenure. By determining which services are most effective, the District will be able to more efficiently allocate scarce counseling resources.	2015-2016	Minimal to moderate	Low

Priority #1: Create High Expectations *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
In the school	**8.3: Ensure That Every Middle and High School Student Meets With An Academic Counselor Every Semester**. While widespread 1-on-1 counseling support may not be realistic, the District should establish a counseling protocol whereby every middle and high school student meets 1-on-1 with a counselor at least once per semester.	2016-2017	Substantial (staffing)	High
	8.4: Implement Tracking System. To better track student academic counseling services, the District should invest in or adapt an existing database capable of managing basic functions including scheduling, review of a student's academic history, and a notes tool so counselors can input summaries of the advice provided to a student. By keeping a master database, the school will be able to maintain the institutional knowledge of the counseling services each student has received.	2016-2017	Moderate (technology)	High
	Objective 9: Develop robust home visit program to build stronger partnerships between teachers and parents			
In the community	**9.1: Establish an Office of Parent/Guardian Engagement**. The District should reorganize itself to create one central location for parents and guardians to engage with the District. In addition to making the District more accessible to parents and guardians, this Office will be responsible for proactively engaging parents, too. The new office will allow for the District to rapidly respond to parent concerns and questions.	2014-2015 (planning) 2015-2016 (roll out)	Moderate to substantial (staffing)	High
	9.2: Develop and Deploy District-Wide Communications Plan for Parents. The District must develop a robust communications plan to reach parents and guardians. The District must think strategically about its messaging to and methods for reaching parents and guardians.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High

Priority #1: Create High Expectations *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
In the community	**9.3: Encourage Teachers To Outline Plan For Communicating With Families**. While the District should develop a comprehensive strategy for communicating its interests and needs to parents and guardians, so must individual teachers. The District should encourage its teachers to develop strong relationships with their students' parents and guardians, starting by supporting teachers developing their own, customized plan for communicating with parents and guardians, maintaining open lines of communications, and tracking parental interaction.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High
	9.4: Work with California Home Visit Program For Professional Development. To increase the likelihood of successful home visits, the District should partner with experts in home visit programs, such as the California Home Visit Program, to provide professional development to teachers and administrators that will be responsible for carrying out the home visits.	2014-2015	Moderate to substantial (staffing)	High
	Objective 10: Recruit and continually engage broad array of Linked Learning partners			
	10.1: Map Business Community. The District's network in the business community is insufficient to meet its Linked Learning needs. Although there are some very strong partnerships between the District and West County businesses, the District needs to invest the time and energy expanding its network and cultivating relationships with the local business community. As a first step, the District should partner with local business collaboratives and organizations, to map the West County business community and identify potential Linked Learning partners.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High

Priority #1: Create High Expectations *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
n the community	**10.2: Build WCCUSD Business Council**. The District should form the WCCUSD Business Council, a committee of local business and civic leaders committed to the District's success. This Council should meet quarterly and be used as (1) a forum to update the business community on key District initiatives and goings on, (2) a forum for the business community to bring community issues and concerns to the attention of the District, (3) an opportunity to brainstorm solutions to District problems (especially those related to the community-at-large), and (4) serve as a conduit between the District and the business community, helping the District build its network of business leaders.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High
	10.3: Formalize Linked Learning Partner Expectations. Currently, serving as a Linked Learning partner is somewhat ambiguous; partners do not know what the District expects and the District does not have clarity as to how partners are committed to supporting its Linked Learning efforts. To overcome this ambiguity, the District should commit to formalize its expectations of Linked Learning partners so that the cooperative endeavor is maximally valuable. In doing this, the District should rely on its current and potential Linked Learning partners to develop the expectations collaboratively.	2014-2015	None	Medium
	10.4: Invite Business Leaders Into School. The District should be intentional about inviting business leaders, especially those from companies serving as Linked Learning partners, into schools to engage with students. These interactions can occur through formal presentations about the work of a particular business leader or informally through in-class discussions or mentorship. By exposing students to the business leaders and new perspectives, WCCUSD will pique students' intellectual curiosity and increase their excitement about future career opportunities.	2014-2015	None	Low

Priority #1: Create High Expectations *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
	Objective 11: Strengthen partnership with Contra Costa College and a pathways program with CSU East Bay			
In the community	**11.1: Define and Communicate the Skills Students Need to Be College Ready.** The District should partner with community stakeholders, such as the Ed Fund's West County College Access Network (which includes representatives from Contra Costa College), to clearly articulate what it means to be "college ready." By having a clear set of guidelines of the academic skills needed to be "college ready," the District will be able to align high school curriculum and academic supports to better prepare students for college success.	2014-2015 (develop guidelines) 2015-2016 (align curriculum and academic supports)	Minimal (staffing)	Medium

Priority #2: Support Quality Instruction

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
In the classroom	**Objective 12: Decentralize District by empowering principals to set their hiring, professional development, and budgeting priorities**			
	12.1: Develop Standardized Measurements for Principal and School Performance Assessment. The District, in conjunction with principals, teachers, parents, and community stakeholders, should collaboratively develop standardized measurements for school performance. These measures should be used for principals to assess school progress, the District to gauge principal and school effectiveness (both individually and across the District), and for the District to communicate school performance.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High
	12.2: Minimize red tape. Principals throughout the District are mired in paperwork in response to District policies and special requests. The District must revisit its data collection, reporting, and compliance practices to minimize red tape and free principals to run their schools. In reevaluating what paperwork is necessary and what is not, the District should align its requests with WCCUSD's mission, vision, and values.	2014-2015	None; Potential long-term savings	High
	12.3: Develop a Principal Academy. Empowering principals means that the District needs high quality, committed, and professional principals. To sustain the long-term supply of qualified individuals, the District must invest in its human capital and leadership pipeline. By developing a principal academy, WCCUSD can develop strong principal professional development and training programs that will adequately prepare the District's principals for success.	2016-2017	Substantial	High
	12.4: Facilitate Teacher, Parent, and Principal Collaborative Decision-Making. The District should facilitate collaboration between principals, teachers, and parents to strengthen school performance, increase community buy-in, and create a collaborative, cooperative school environment. This structure may take on a variety of forms, including school town halls, school site councils, and special committees.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High

Priority #2: Support Quality Instruction *(continued)*

Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
Objective 13: Implement professional learning communities (PLCs) at all levels			
13.1: Create Time for Collaboration. While most principals, teachers, and classified staff are eager to participate in PLCs, the current school day structure does not make such collaboration easy to facilitate. WCCUSD should support PLC development by adapting its school schedule, hiring additional support to ensure classroom coverage, and creating meeting space to enable meaningful collaboration.	2014-215	Moderate (staffing)	High
13.2: Share Best Practices. The District should devote staff time to monitor PLCs to learn about effective collaboratives and creative initiatives. As best practices emerge, the District should share the practices throughout the District. The District may want to consider developing its website to include a resource bank and comment board for District staff to share and discuss best practices.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing)	Medium
Objective 14: Provide targeted, quality, focused professional development			
14.1: Make Professional Development Site-Specific and Teacher Led. The District should provide guidelines regarding professional development goals to all schools. Within the guidelines, the District should allow school sites and teachers to drive the content of their professional development so that it better meets the goals of the specific school-site and the needs of the teaching staff.	2014-2015	Minimal to moderate (staffing)	High
14.2: Develop Standardized Evaluation. To track the efficacy of school-site driven professional development, the District should develop a basic evaluation form that teachers will be asked to submit after completing a professional development session. By centralizing this function, the District will be able to monitor the professional development work in the District and provide strategic support to schools in need of improved professional training.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Medium

In the classroom

Priority #2: Support Quality Instruction *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
In the classroom	**14.3: Support School-Sites With Standardized Needs Surveys.** The District should support principals by helping them survey their teachers about school-wide professional development needs. This upfront analysis will help principals strategically slate professional development throughout the year.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Low
	Objective 15: Create a culture of constant improvement			
	15.1: Expand the Teacher Coach Program. The District should seek to replicate the success of its Math Coach program by developing parallel efforts in other subject areas. The District should look to find dynamic teachers of teachers to develop the coaching programs and share best practices.	2014-2015	Moderate to substantial (staffing)	High
	15.2: Facilitate Teacher Mentoring Program. To support teacher professional development and protect against burn out, WCCUSD should look to formalize a teacher mentoring program. Younger, less experienced teachers should be asked to identify more experienced teachers that they want to learn from and the District should facilitate the matching process. In order for the program to succeed, the District should make accommodations for both the mentor and mentee to spend time with one another during the school day.	2014-2015 (pilot)	Minimal (staffing)	Medium
	15.3: Establish Principal Coaching and Mentoring Programs. As with teachers, principals are eager to receive meaningful professional development and would benefit from coaching and mentoring programs. The District should look to a well-respected principal and someone who would be a good teacher of principals to develop these efforts.	2015-2016 (pilot)	Minimal (staffing)	Medium

Priority #2: Support Quality Instruction *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
In the classroom	**Objective 16: Provide support and training throughout implementation of Common Core**			
	16.1: Utilize New State Funding to Support PLCs. The District should use new state funding to support PLCs specifically intended to provide Common Core implementation support to teachers. These PLCs may already exist at some schools or may require some help from the District to begin operating. Both existing and new PLCs may need additional support with professional development content creation.	Ongoing for entire transition process	Moderate (staffing)	Medium
	Objective 17: Prioritize good human capital practices			
	17.1: Recruit and Retain Dynamic Principals. It is no secret that the District has struggled with recruiting and retaining principals; turnover has been extremely high. The District should prioritize school leadership by emphasizing recruiting, training, and retaining strong, effective, and dynamic principals. In addition to the strong principals already in place, the District should look within its own ranks to identify and groom talent, as well as look outside of the District to aggressively recruit leaders to work in the District. The District should put a premium on retaining talent, going out of its way to create positive and supportive work environments. In addition, the District may want to consider creating a bonus structure to incentivize principals to stay at least five years.	To begin immediately	Moderate	High
	17.2: Regularly and Publicly Acknowledge High Quality Instruction. The District should strategically identify principals and teachers it wants to retain and acknowledge their good work. This can and occur at formal events (e.g., award ceremonies, School Board meetings, etc.) and in private (e.g., informally over coffee, call from the Superintendent, etc.).	Ongoing	None	Medium

Priority #2: Support Quality Instruction *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
In the classroom	**17.3: Leverage External Teacher and Administrator Training Programs.** The District should embrace programs such as Teach for America and New Leaders that are bringing young, energetic, talented educators to WCCUSD. The District should work to integrate these program participants into their school sites, connecting them with mentors, and empowering them to take initiative. The District should be vocal about its desire to retain alumni and its view of these programs as a long-term talent pipeline.	To begin immediately	Moderate (program investment)	Medium
	17.4: Decentralize Teacher Selection and Training Processes. To combat teacher burn out and turnover, the District should empower school sites to hire staff and develop their professional culture. Principals should engage their staff to provide input into the hiring process to help create a more unified, committed staff at each school site.	2015-2016	Moderate (staffing)	Medium
	Objective 18: Support student data and information sharing across grade levels			
	18.1: Leverage the California Healthy Kids Survey and Adopt CORE Accountability System. The District should use the data from the California Healthy Kids Survey and CORE Accountability System to provide each teacher with a dossier on each incoming student's academic, social, and emotional skills. By plying teachers with this information, they will be better prepared to meet their students' needs.	2015-2016	Moderate (technology)	Low
	18.2: Make Teacher Access to Student Data Easy. The District should ensure that the method by which it maintains student data and information is easily accessible and useable by teachers. This must be balanced with the obvious privacy interests of the students, most likely through a technological solution.	2016-2017	Moderate (technology)	Low
	Objective 19: Implement best practices for educating English Language Learners			
	19.1: Create a Best Practices Learning Community. The District should partner with other school districts and ELL experts for technical assistance.	2014-2015	Substantial	High

Priority #2: Support Quality Instruction *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
In the classroom	**Objective 20: Expand dual immersion program**			
	20.1: Expand Dual Immersion Program Geographically. There is substantial demand throughout the District for dual immersion education programs. The District should consider expanding the program to parts of the District without access to these programs.	2017-2018	Substantial	Low
	Objective 21: Expand STEM education within the Linked Learning initiative			
	21.1: Expand Innovative STEM Opportunities District-Wide. There is substantial demand throughout the District for access to some of the innovative STEM programming offered at some schools. The District should consider working with current external funders to expand the program to parts of the District without access to these programs.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing, facilities)	Low
	Objective 22: Increase the graduation rate for students with disabilities			
	22.1: Improve Program Quality for Greatest Needs. The District should develop state-of-the-art, inclusive programs to serve its moderate to severe students.	2016-2017	Substantial (staffing, technology)	High
	22.2: Improve Data Processing, Analysis, and Sharing. The District should revisit its special education data practices to improve its ability to learn from the data it is currently collecting.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Medium
	22.3: Strengthen Special-Ed Teaching Staff. The District should partner with higher institutions to recruit, retain and train highly qualified special education teachers.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High
	22.4: Update the SELPA Local Plan. The District should work with regional partners to update and finalize its SELPA Local Plan.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Medium
	22.5: Implement the Instruction Support Program (ISP Model). The District should implement the ISP Model across K -12 to better meet the needs of its special education students.	2015-2016	Moderate (staffing)	Low

Priority #2: Support Quality Instruction *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
In the classroom	**22.6: Provide Professional Development on Universal Design for Learning (UDL).** The District should provide professional development on UDL to increase teacher capacity in developing student goals and objectives aligned with the common core standards.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing)	Medium
	Objective 23: Improve Response to Intervention			
	23.1: Improve Tier 1 Intervention Efficacy. The District should work with general education teachers to increase their comfort with teaching Tier 1 interventions.	2014-2015	Minimal	Medium
	23.2: Implement to Fidelity Tier 2 and Tier 3 Interventions in Grade K-12. The District should work with all schools, K-12, to perfect their implementation of Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.	2015-2016	Moderate	Medium
	23.3: Develop Learning Centers at All Elementary Schools. The District should support all elementary schools in developing a functional Learning Center with appropriately credentialed teachers to provide Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports.	2015-2016	Moderate	Low
	Objective 24: Keep technology current for the 21st century classroom			
	24.1: Conduct a District-Wide Technology Audit. The District should do a complete review of the technology it is using both for educational and operational purposes and identify what technology it needs to improve efficiency and educational effectiveness.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing)	High
	24.2: Transition to E-Books and Online Resources. The District should work to phase out textbooks and other print resources and replace them with e-books and other online resources. To do this effectively, the District will ultimately likely need to have a computer, tablet, or other internet-enabled device per student.	2017-2018	Substantial start-up (technology); Potential long-term savings	Medium

Priority #2: Support Quality Instruction *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
In the classroom	**24.3: Provide Students With Critical Technology Skills.** The District should identify the key technology skills every student should possess to be successful in the 21st century and integrate those skills into the curriculum.	2015-2016	Minimal (staffing)	Medium
	Objective 25: Commit to culturally responsive instruction			
	25.1: Integrate Training Into Professional Development and PLCs. While some teachers are comfortable and adept at culturally responsive instruction, many identified this as an area where they need professional development. As such, the District should work to integrate this training into its professional develop schedule and PLC structure.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Medium
	25.2: Add Demonstrated Teacher Commitment To Informal Teacher Reviews. To emphasize the District's commitment to the implementation of culturally responsive instruction, teacher reviews and observations should include some analysis of the teacher's progress toward integrating quality culturally responsive instruction methods.	2015-2016	Minimal (staffing)	Low
	Objective 26: Support ongoing adult education and learning			
	26.1: Provide Targeted ESL Classes For Parents. Given the substantial ELL population in the District, teachers will have substantially more support in the home if the District helps parents of ELL students learn English language skills. By building their own language base, parents of ELL students will be able to work with their students at home and increase their chances of success in the classroom.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing)	High
	26.2: Train Parents to Support Their Children's Education. The District should expand its efforts to train parent how to best support their children. Between programs like PIQE and the home visit program (Objective 9), the District will be able to better create a network of supporters, both in the school and in the home, committed to the same objective: student success.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing)	High

Priority #2: Support Quality Instruction *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
	Objective 27: Ensure challenging programs for high achieving students			
In the school	**27.1: Challenge Each School to Develop a Program for High Achieving Students.** The District should support schools developing these programs and share best practices throughout the District.	2016-2017	Substantial	Low
	Objective 28: Leverage and coordinate academic supports			
	28.1: Utilize Community-Based Resources To Improve Learning In All Schools. The District should seek out community-based partners, such as the Writers Coach Connection, to provide additional academic and instructional support in WCCUSD schools.	2014-2015	Minimal	Medium
	28.2: Streamline the Intake of Community-Based Resources. See Objective 32.	2014-2015	Substantial	High
In the community	**Objective 29: Develop strong business partnerships to support workplace learning**			
	29.1: Recruit and Continually Engage Broad Array of Linked Learning Partners. See Objective 10.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Medium

Priority #3: Embrace Collective Ownership

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
In the classroom	**Objective 30: Make school sites the epicenter of the community**			
	30.1: For Each School, Identify A Staff Member, Parent Volunteer, or Team of People To Be Responsible for Community Engagement and School Culture. The District should replicate Peres school culture model by specifically charging and individual or team of people to be responsible for welcoming students, parents, and community members into the school and all other aspects of opening the school to the community.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Medium
	30.2: Lower the Barriers to Parent Volunteering at School. The District should explore how it might make parent volunteering opportunities more accessible while still complying with the law. The current requirements, especially mandating that all volunteers be fingerprinted, serve as a deterrent to some parents interested in volunteering.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Low
	Objective 31: Decentralize the District by empowering school-site administrators and staff			
	31.1: Empower School-Sites to Establish Their Own Budgets. The District should provide principals with a set of expectations and a total annual budget. Principals should then be given the autonomy to establish their own budgets within those parameters and asked to collaborate with school-site staff and parents to set budget priorities. The District should provide support to principals both in the budgeting and community collaboration processes.	Begin in 2014-2015; complete by 2017-2018	Minimal (staffing)	High
	31.2: Empower School-Sites to Manage Their Own Teacher Selection and Training Processes. To the extent possible, the District should decentralize most human capital decisions, giving school sites control of creating and establishing their own unique culture. The District should establish a protocol to support school sites that need help finding and attracting talent.	Begin in 2015-2016; complete by 2017-2018	Minimal (staffing)	High

Priority #3: Embrace Collective Ownership *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
	Objective 32: Centralize the management of community-based organizations, funders, and the business community			
In the school	32.1: **Create a Cabinet-Level Office of Community Engagement.** The District should create cabinet-level Office of Community Engagement that will serve as the central entry point for all community organizations, funders, businesses that want to engage with the District. The Office of Community Engagement will be responsible for all communication, management, accountability, and sustainability issues applicable to the District's work with community partners. By centralizing this function, the District will be able to better and more clearly communicate with, develop relationships with, and leverage its community partners. Fundamentally, the Office of Community Engagement will make it substantially easier for community partners to work with the District.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing)	High
	32.2: Define the Relationship Between Out-of-School Time (OST) Providers and the District. The District should have the Office of Community Engagement create clear goals, roles, and responsibilities for OST providers and the District. By explicitly articulating expectations, the District will be able to better manage OST programs and OST providers will be able to more effectively tailor their programs to meet District expectations.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Medium
	32.3: Develop a Menu of Community Offerings. The District should develop a full menu of the various programs and services offered by community partners to schools and students for school sites to select from. By centrally compiling and publishing this information, the District will free schools from vetting each individual program, create equity in program offerings across the District, and ease the administrative burden on the District's community partners that results from offering these programs school by school.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing)	High

Priority #3: Embrace Collective Ownership *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
In the school	**32.4: Annually Evaluate Community Partner Offerings**. The District should articulate clear goals and metrics community partner programs and annually assess and evaluate the programs being offered to schools. As part of this assessment, the District should provide students and parents the opportunity to provide feedback on the programs. This could occur through focus groups, 1-on-1 interviews, or a web-based user feedback site modeled after Yelp.com.	2014-2015	Minimal (staff time)	Medium
Objective 33: Increase parent presence at school				
In the community	**33.1: Invite Parents On Campus At The Start and End of School**. The District should make its school campuses welcoming to parents by inviting them to come to school at the start and end of each school day. This will have two positive results: (1) by building a critical mass of parents on campus, schools will be sending the message that they want parents to be involved, and (2) it will further open the lines of communication between teachers and parents.	2014-2015	None	Medium
	33.2: Implement Parent Contracts. The District should consider piloting parent/guardian contracts that focus on student attendance, performance, attitude, as well as overall parent engagement. By beginning each year with each teacher clearly articulating their expectations of parents, parental engagement and communication should improve.	2015-2016	None	Medium
	33.2: Use The School Facilities For Community Programming In The Evenings and Weekends. One of the District's core strengths, its renovated facilities, should be an asset for the entire community. By making the space available for other community programming, especially programs targeting parents and families, the school will further become a familiar and welcoming location. As the District moves towards Full Service Community Schools, this type of engagement should occur naturally.	2014-2015	Minimal (facilities)	High

Priority #3: Embrace Collective Ownership *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
In the community	**33.3: Provide Professional Development To Build Teachers' Family Engagement Skills**. The District should provide teachers and administrators professional development designed to train them how to better engage parents and families. This should likely occur through the District's PLC structure.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Low
	Objective 34: Expand outreach to business community			
	34.1: Create Business Outreach Campaign. The District, through the Office of Community Engagement, should develop a campaign to invite local businesses to engage with the District's work. The campaign could include small group meetings, lunches with business organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Council of Industries, meetings at local companies, direct mail, or a variety of other outreach methods.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing, media)	Medium
	34.2: Create Standard for Business Partner. The District should develop a formal standard for what it means to be a business affiliated with the District. This will cover all businesses interested in supporting WCCUSD through the WCCUSD Business Council, Linked Learning initiative, volunteer programs, and other ways.	2014-2015	Minimal	Low
	34.3: Streamline Opportunities for Businesses and Employees To Engage with the District. The District, through the Office of Community Engagement, should develop a menu of options and guidelines for how businesses can plug into the District's work.	2014-2015	Minimal	Low
	Objective 35: Open the District to collaboration			
	35.1: Adopt A District-Wide Policy About Being A Good Partner. As the District expands and deepens its work with community partners, including businesses, foundations, nonprofits, and others, the District should be vigilant about being a good partner. The District should adopt language that signals humbleness and openness to the ideas offered by its partners. The District should strive to be viewed as a valued community asset that every community-based organization, business, and foundation is excited about and proud to work with.	2014-2015	None	High

Priority #3: Embrace Collective Ownership *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
In the community	**35.2: Provide Professional Development On Collaboration.** The District should provide administrators working with external partners professional training on how to collaborate and be a good partner.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Medium
	Objective 36: Expand and deepen relationships with the West County philanthropic community			
	36.1: Map the Philanthropic Community. The District should partner with the Richmond Funders Collaborative to better understand the bounds of the West County philanthropic community.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High
	36.2: Network With the Philanthropic Community. The District should work to strengthen its relationships with its friends and colleagues in the West County philanthropic community. It is important that the District have a positive and open dialogue with the major foundations and philanthropists in the region so that the District is able to partner with the philanthropic community when opportunities arise. The District should also work to meet West County foundations and philanthropists that it does not currently know.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High
	36.3: Work With Philanthropic Community to Align Funding to WCCUSD's Strategic Plan. The District should work closely with current and interested foundations and philanthropists to align their educational funding with the needs of the WCCUSD's strategic plan.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High
	Objective 37: Engage all constituencies throughout the District			
	37.1: Schedule Community Engagement Efforts Throughout District. The District should be cognizant to avoid becoming Richmond-centric or perceived as Richmond-centric. The District's geographic diversity is both a challenge and a strength, so it should work to rise to the challenge of representing all corners of the District and celebrating WCCUSD's geographic diversity.	Ongoing	None	High

Priority #4: Invest in the Whole Child

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
In the classroom	**Objective 38: Support Full Service Community Schools (FSCS) throughout the District**			
	38.1: Aggressively Seek External Funding For Support. The District should aggressively solicit support from the federal, state, county, and city governments, corporate foundations, and private philanthropists to help fund the development of the District's FSCS initiative.	Ongoing	Minimal (staffing)	High
	38.2: Empower a Director to Oversee FSCS Program. Expansion of the FSCS program is a major undertaking requiring a central staff member to be responsible for coordinating the various moving parts. To enable the Director to succeed, the District should grant the Director substantial decision-making authority. The Director should be housed in the Office of Community Engagement.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High
	38.3: Establish Vertical Collaboratives For Each School Family. The District should use the San Pablo Engine Team as a model and create FSCS collaboratives for every school family. All key actors and stakeholders involved in the school family's geography should be invited to participate to assist with coordination, collaboration, and clear communication.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing)	High
	38.4: Establish A Horizontal Collaborative Across the FSCS Teams. The District's FSCS Program Director should facilitate this collaborative, comprised of 1-3 leaders from each school family's FSCS effort. The collaborative can be used to share best practices and provide relevant professional development across the FSCS teams.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Medium
	Objective 39: Integrate social and emotional learning into the classroom			
	39.1: Further Invest In Teacher Professional Development To Provide Social And Emotional Support. The District should create additional opportunities for teacher professional development targeting on social and emotional learning. Additionally, the District should look to support even more detailed professional development through PLCs.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Medium

Priority #4: Invest in the Whole Child *(continued)*

Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
39.2: Create Partnership With Sacramento City Unified School District. The District should look to work with and learn from SCUSD, a school district that is developing and implementing many best practices regarding classroom social and emotional learning.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Low
Objective 40: Make academies more flexible for students			
40.1: Encourage Students To Take Classes Beyond Their Academy. The District should adapt the academy structure to enable students to branch out and take classes in other disciplines and engage with students with other interests. The District might want to consider developing a majors/minors structure akin to post-secondary education. This would give students additional flexibility and potentially support Objective 6.	2015-2016	Moderate (staffing)	Low
Objective 41: Provide every student with access to art and music education			
41.1: Assess Current State of Arts and Music Education Programs. The District should analyze the arts and music education programs currently functioning in the District to determine the breadth of depth of the offerings. The District should determine the current baseline percentage of students served and determine what it needs to fill the gap.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing)	Low
41.2: Conduct a Landscape Analysis of Community-Based Organization Arts and Music Education Providers. The District should identify the CBO arts and music education providers currently working within the District and those interested in working in the District.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Low
41.3: Raise External Funding To Fill Budget Gaps. Based on its findings in Objective 36, the District should seek to fill arts and music education budget gaps by identifying and partnering with foundations and other funders interested in arts and music education.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Low

In the classroom

Priority #4: Invest in the Whole Child *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
	Objective 42: Build out a suite of Out-of-School Time programs to serve the whole child			
In the school	**42.1: Conduct School-By-School Audit Of Services Offered.** The District, through the Office of Community Engagement, should work closely with the Ed Fund and other community partners to comprehensively map all of the services and programs offered at every school. Through this process, the District should identify what services and programs are missing.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing)	High
	42.2 Identify and Recruit Program Providers to Fill the Gaps. The District should collaborate with the Ed Fund, Richmond Funders Collaborative, faith based organizations, and others to identify and recruit CBOs and other service providers to fill the gaps.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing, program costs)	Medium
	42.3: Provide Menu of Options to Schools. Once the District has established a full stable of service providers, the District should share a comprehensive menu of provider options to principals. See Objective 32.3.	2015-2016	Minimal (staffing)	High
	42.4: Align Offerings Within School Families. The District should strive to maintain an equitable set of offerings across school families.	2015-2016	Minimal (staffing)	High
	Objective 43: Support student physical and psychological health			
	43.1: Expand On-Site Health Clinics. The District should continue to build out its on-site health offerings to meet student health needs.	2015-2016	Substantial	High
	43.2: Expand Social and Emotional Counseling. The District should continue to expand its psychological counseling services to meet the demands of the WCCUSD student body.	2014-2015	Substantial	High
	Objective 44: Create a welcoming, exciting, and vibrant school climate conducive to student success			
	44.1: Increase Community Awareness. The District should create a system to regularly educate and update school staff about potential safety concerns, community happenings, and gang activity so all staff members understand the broader context for their students, the school, and the community.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High

Priority #4: Invest in the Whole Child *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
In the school	**44.2: Strengthen Relationships Between SROs and City Police.** The District should collaborate with city police departments to provide training programs for SROs and city police to strengthen communication and working relationships.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Medium
	44.3: Improve Campus Cleanliness and Maintenance. The District should hire additional janitorial and maintenance staff to improve overall cleanliness and upkeep of campuses	2014-2015	Moderate	Medium
	44.4 Create an Anti-Bullying Plan. The District should facilitate students at each middle and high school in developing an anti-bullying plan that will be embedded into each master school site plan.	2015-2016	Minimal (staffing)	Medium
	44.5 Further Implement the Restorative Justice Program. The District should continue implementing its restorative justice program throughout WCCUSD.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing)	High
	44.6 Increase Overall Emergency Preparedness. The District should hold more emergency and crisis preparedness drills for teachers and staff. The District might want to consider offering staff an emergency preparedness certification program.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing)	High
	Objective 45: Expand efforts to provide healthy foods to students			
	45.1 Further Develop School Gardens Programs. The school gardens program provides students with an experiential opportunity to learn nutrition and science and is valued in the community. The District should expand where possible.	2015-2016	Minimal (staffing)	Low
	45.2: Offer Healthy Cooking Classes. The District should look to replicate the healthy cooking classes at Helms as additional FSCS open.	2016-2017	Minimal (staffing)	Low
Community	**Objective 46: Proactively work with local government, businesses and foundations, and local and national teach unions to increase the District's available resources**			
	46.1: Create A Strategic Development Plan. The District has the opportunity to substantially grow its discretionary budget through government and private grants. To seize this opportunity, the District should develop a comprehensive and thoughtful development plan that identifies prospective funding sources, methods for stewarding funders, and articulates key fundraising messages.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High

Priority #5: Transparency and Accountability

Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
Objective 47: Move to CORE accountability standards and assessments.			
47.1: Opt Into Federal Waiver. The ten CORE school districts are currently negotiating with the USDE for a waiver. If successful, the districts will implement their own accountability system which aligns closely with the mission and vision of WCCUSD. Districts across California will be eligible to opt into the waiver - we recommend that WCCUSD follow this path.	2014-2015	None	High
Objective 48: Collaboratively set District-wide teacher and administrator performance standards to determine professional development needs			
48.1: Create 360 Teacher and Administrator Reviews. The District should establish a 360 review protocol for teacher and administrators. As part of the protocol, teachers and administrators should collaboratively determine which stakeholders (mix of students, parents, direct reports, supervisors, and peers) will be asked to review which personnel.	2015-2016	Moderate (staffing)	Medium
48.2: Survey Key Stakeholders. The District should create student, parent, teacher, and administrator surveys that allow for quantitative and qualitative feedback.	2015-2016	Minimal (staffing)	Medium
48.3: Share Anonymized Results. The District should publish anonymized review results for each school and across WCCUSD.	2016-2017	Minimal (staffing)	Low
Objective 49: Develop ongoing practice of listening to District stakeholders			
49.1: Host Community-Wide Town Halls. The District should facilitate town halls three times per year for school-site and District administration to listen to the concerns of students, parents, and teachers. The District should seek to make these events as inclusive and participatory as possible.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High
49.2: Host Regular Focus Groups. The District should conduct regular stakeholder focus groups to delve more deeply into issues of concern to specific schools and stakeholder groups.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High

In the classroom (row label spanning objectives)

Priority #5: Transparency and Accountability *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
In the classroom	**49.3: Engage the Community Through Social Media**. While some community members will engage with the District through in person meetings, focus groups, and town halls, many more will opt not to participate. The District should seek to increase community engagement through its social media channels.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Medium
	49.4: Survey Stakeholders. In addition to in-person and social media engagement, the District should strategically use online and offline surveys to gauge stakeholder opinion regarding key District concerns.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Medium
	49.5: Publicly Respond to Important Parent Concerns. Where appropriate, the District should publicly respond to important parent issues that continue to arise. While the District should attempt to respond to all reasonable parent concerns, it should be judicious about publicly responding to concern trends. The goal is for the District to gain public confidence that it is listening and responding in a reasonable, thoughtful, and appropriate manner. Public responses may occur through the District's website, email, robocalls, press releases, social media, and other methods for mass communication.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Medium
	Objective 50: Improve internal data collection and management system			
	50.1: Conduct Data Needs Assessment And Simplify Collection Practices. The District currently collects an enormous amount of data, due in part to compliance policies and in part to established practices and procedures. The District should conduct an assessment of what data it actually needs to collect and what data it wants to collect. Once completed, the District should develop streamlined data collection policies that reflect the need to collect data on the District's critical metrics.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing)	High

Priority #5: Transparency and Accountability *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
In the classroom	**50.2: Establish Simple Data Collection Protocol**. Once the District streamlines and identifies the data it plans to collect, the District should establish a simple data collection protocol. The goal of the protocol should be to reduce the amount of time teachers and administrators spend gathering data and compiling reports for the District. The protocol should also create a simple process for the District to acquire and process the collected data from all of the school sites.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High
	50.3: Empower a Chief Data Officer. The District should establish a Chief Data Officer for managing the District's data collection, processing, analysis, and reporting efforts.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing)	Medium
	50.4: Develop a Regular Data Reporting Process. The District should establish a regular reporting process and calendar for sharing data with key stakeholders, including the WCCUSD Cabinet, School Board, school-site administrators, Strategic Plan Accountability Committee (a new entity comprised of community leaders to monitor strategic plan progress; see Objective 56), and the general public.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High
	50.5: Leverage Data Analysis Expertise. Look to build a strategic partnership with an educational institution, such as UC Berkeley, to manage, scrub, and crunch WCCUSD's data in exchange for the right to use the data for education research. The District should study and consider replicating the Redwood City 2020 model, a good example of a partnership between a public school district and a higher education research institution.	2015-2016	Minimal (staffing)	Medium

Priority #5: Transparency and Accountability *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
	Objective 51: Support strategic partners (CBOs, funders) by providing data necessary to improve program outcomes			
In the school	**51.1: Establish Clear Expectations Regarding Data**. The District, through the Office of Community Engagement (see Objective 32), should collaborate with community organization collaboratives, including the Ed Fund and the Richmond Funders Collaborative, to create clear guidelines as to what data the District expects its partners (especially community-based organization service providers) to collect and what data the District will collect. The guidelines should prescribe how the District will share data with its partners and the intervals at which the District will share the data. The District and its community partners should revisit the guidelines on a regular basis to make sure that they are working properly and do not need revision.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High
In the school	**51.2: Share Agreed-Upon Data With Community Partners**. To the extent possible, the District , through the Office of Community Engagement, should share collected data identified in the agreed upon guidelines (see Objective 51.1). The District should avoid fulfilling one-off data requests from external partners to maintain the primacy of the guidelines and eliminate any claims of bias or favoritism.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High
	Objective 52: Manage ongoing community engagement effort to listen and respond to concerns			
In the community	**52.1: Consistently Engage Stakeholders**. The District should conduct community-wide town halls and focus groups to engage students, teachers, parents, administrators, and external stakeholders such as the business, nonprofit, funder, and faith communities.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High
In the community	**52.2: Build Social Media Presence**. The District should invest the time and energy into developing a more robust social media presence. By strategically building its social media communities, the District will be able to better listen to a more diverse community of voices and more rapidly respond to community concerns.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing)	Medium

Priority #5: Transparency and Accountability *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
	52.3: Redesign the WCCUSD Website. The District should consider redesigning the WCCUSD website to make it more user friendly. It should also consider adding social functionality (e.g., social media sharing enabled, community posting, etc.).	2015-2016	Moderate (staffing, technology)	Medium
	52.4: Improve Media Outreach. The District should consider working with a communications firm to strengthen its media outreach capabilities. The District would benefit by having more effective communications and public relations.	2016-2017	Moderate (staffing)	Low
	Objective 53: Regularly share the District's vision and what is working and not working			
In the community	**54.1: Report on Progress**. The District should use the Strategic Plan Accountability Report to publicly share data on a regular basis. Data and honest analysis should be boiled down to key messages that can be shared through traditional and social media channels.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High
	54.2: Provide Updates From the Superintendent. The Superintendent should consider giving an annual State of the School District speech that lays out a clear vision of where the District is heading. As part of this event, the Superintendent should host a public Q&A session.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing, event)	Medium
	54.3: Push Messaging Strategically. The District should promote and embrace transparency, but it should also be cognizant of the need to highlight big successes. Stories about public education often emphasize the negative, so the District should seek out positive stories and work with its media partners to promote messages about and stories highlighting WCCUSD successes.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Low

Priority #5: Transparency and Accountability *(continued)*

Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
Objective 54: Identify who inside the District is responsible for what tasks			
55.1: Simplify the District's Organizational Chart and Create New Job Descriptions. The District's current organizational structure is too complicated and inaccessible. Internal and external stakeholders complain of being overwhelmed by the bureaucracy and paralyzed by the inability to find the "right person." The District should consider overhauling and simplifying the current organizational structure. Even if the District opts to maintain its current structure, it should create new job descriptions for all departments and positions so that there is internal clarity about who is responsible for each District function, program, and service.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing)	High
55.2: Make the District's Organizational Chart and Job Descriptions Public. The District should publish the WCCUSD organizational chart and a description of each Department on its website to enable students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the public to more easily navigate the District's bureaucracy.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High
55.4: Publish Frequently Asked Questions. The District should identify the most common community needs or requests for information and publish a clear FAQ on its website.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Low
Objective 55: Monitor strategic plan progress			
56.1: Create a Strategic Plan Accountability Committee. The District should create an ongoing Strategic Plan Accountability Committee comprised of community-wide stakeholders that will report to the School Board. The Committee will be charged with monitoring the District's progress against the strategic plan and helping the District address strategic hurdles that emerge during the implementation phase.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High

In the community

Priority #6: Innovate

Implementation Strategy		Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
Objective 56: Lower barriers to experimentation				
	56.1: Balance Compliance Regulations With School-Site Autonomy. The District should work to increase school-site autonomy while clearly articulating its expectations of principals. As part of this transition, the District should reevaluate the scope of compliance it truly requires from each school. The more flexibility and local control the District is able to provide principals and teachers, the greater the opportunity for innovation, experimentation, and new breakthroughs.	2014-2015	None	High
	56.2: Celebrate Experimentation. The District should publicly celebrate principal, teacher, and student experiment successes and failures in an effort to build a culture of innovation. The District might want to consider giving a school innovation award for the boldest and most creative innovations. Additionally, the District might consider holding a "Fail Fair" where teachers and principals from across the District are invited to a town hall to share stories of brave risk-taking and experimentation that failed.	2015-2016	Minimal (staffing, event)	Medium
	56.3: Establish an Experimentation Fund. The District should partner with external funders to develop an experimentation fund for classroom teachers and school-site administrators to try novel ideas. Grant recipients should be required to transparently share their outcomes.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing, grants)	Medium
	56.4: Partner With Charter Schools. The District should consider partnering with local charter schools to develop a set of guidelines for District-charter collaboration and shared learning. Both District schools and charters can learn from one another and should develop a healthy working relationship.	2014-2015	Variable	Medium

(In the classroom)

Priority #6: Innovate *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
	Objective 57: Strategically integrate technology into the classroom, school-site, and District			
In the classroom	**57.1: Make Smart Investments in Technology**. The District should conduct a technology needs assessment (see Objective 24) and make smart investments in technology. The District should consider forming an ad hoc committee to evaluate potential District-wide technology purchases with the goal of avoiding overpaying or selecting substandard products.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High
	56.2: Train Teachers and Administrators to Properly and Effectively Use New Technology. New technology is only as valuable as it is applied and integrated in the classroom and District offices; if teachers and administrators do not know how to use the technology, it will go to waste. The District should invest significant time and energy in developing and deploying accessible technology training for all staff.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing)	High
	56.3: Provide Ongoing Tech Support. The District should invest in the necessary tech support to ensure that the District's technology is working and up-to-date. While the District can train teachers and administrators how to use the technology (see Objective 56.2), technology will inevitably fail. If tech problems, even minor ones, go unfixed, the technology will be useless to the District.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing)	High
	56.4: Decentralize Technology Acquisition. To the extent possible, the District should decentralize the technology acquisition process so that school-site administrators can rapidly respond to their school needs.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	High
	56.5: Regularly Evaluate All Tech Initiatives. The District should evaluate all tech initiatives based on their impact on student success. The District should continue to invest in those initiatives that have a positive correlation and pivot from those that don't.	2014-2015	Minimal (staffing)	Medium

Priority #6: Innovate *(continued)*

	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Budget Implication	Priority Level
In the school	**Objective 57: Expose students to new ideas**			
	57.1: Create Experiential Learning Opportunities. In addition to dynamic curricular content and teaching, the District should consider expanding field trip programs and internship programs. The District should seek to provide these opportunities during the normal school day as well as through after school and summer programming.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing, travel, programs)	Low
In the community	**Objective 58: Proactively learn from other districts**			
	58.1: Organize Study Missions. The District should establish a study trip program to take a cohort of stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, and community members to visit well-run and innovative schools and school districts to meet with and learn from others.	2014-2015	Moderate (staffing, travel)	High
	58.2: Share Lessons Learned. Upon returning from the study missions, the cohort of stakeholders that attended should be asked to share their findings with the School Board, District Cabinet, and District-identified stakeholders working on the issues at hand.	2014-2015	None	Medium

As a district that jettisoned its dedicated communications staff in 2009 due to budget cuts, WCCUSD is in a position to, essentially, rebuild its communications operation from scratch. It is an opportunity to take a fresh look at how best to communicate key issues to important audiences. The following plan is built to be achievable and scalable over time and to focus communications actions on activities that support overall district goals. It sets an agenda for the first year with some suggested improvements for subsequent years, although the activities recommended for Year 1 provide enough of a robust communications operation that it should be sufficient over time to address nearly all of the district's communications needs.

A comprehensive communications plan should do the following:

1. Implement a communications program that directly helps the district achieve its strategic goals.

2. Foster strong relationships with district stakeholders.

3. Provide focus and direction for messages/methods in support of the district's goals.

4. Enable the district to present itself accurately to audiences.

Strategic Considerations
The strategic plan recommendations are based on the following conditions:

- It is critical that WCCUSD devote at least 1.5 FTE to district communications, both internal and external. It is nearly impossible to effectively communicate without having a person whose primary focus is driving and implementing communications strategy. The leader of this effort should be part of the district's management team to ensure integration of communications with key district activities and priorities.
- The communications plan is a living document that incorporates lessons learned and feedback from audiences and stakeholders.
- The plan places less emphasis on press releases and formal media announcements while focusing more on meeting the needs of constituents where they normally get their information. Mail and email are becoming much less effective than texts, social media and graphically rich communications.
- The plan places a premium on efficient means of information delivery with a heavy emphasis on platforms that reach the most people (often through online media).
- Modern communications activities require a two-way capability. Most audiences are no longer content to simply receive information, they want to interact, comment, express their opinions and ask questions.
- WCCUSD must be committed to open, honest and ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders. Maintaining a two-way conversation with stakeholders is essential for building relationships.
- In general, WCCUSD should focus more on short, easy to understand communications through a variety of channels.

- The plan should be reviewed on an annual basis by the district leadership. It should be used as a basis for providing a framework for future resource and budgetary consideration.

Summary of Year 1 Plan and Activities

This plan includes an ambitious but achievable set of recommendations for the first year of the strategic plan. Given that the district is embarking on a new overall strategy, it's important to integrate communications activities early. The summary of the first year activities are:

- Hire and onboard FTEs
- Identify key audiences and stakeholders
- Perform a communications vulnerability assessment
- Create short and long-term communication milestone calendars
- Establish metrics for success
- Establish personal relationships with key media members
- Content mining
- Grow online presence
- Develop a crisis communications plan

Hire FTEs

WCCUSD should immediately begin a search for a senior communications professional to manage the district's communications operation. The Communications Director should:

- Have at least five years experience in progressively advancing communications positions
- Be able to work in a self-directed environment
- Have significant experience designing and implementing social media efforts
- Have a proven record of success in designing and implementing comprehensive communications campaigns
- Be able to prioritize
- Have public education policy knowledge (not essential, but definitely a plus)

Identify Key Audiences and Stakeholders

WCCUSD should identify and prioritize audiences to whom it will direct its communications activities then design messaging and communications plans that address their specific concerns. First, focus on those audiences and communities who opt-in and who must have information. Efforts should be cost-effective and initially not concerned with reaching 100% of constituents (unless it is required communication by law, regulation or policy). Some examples of key audiences are:

- Parents
- Students
- Teachers
- Business leaders
- Community leaders
- Religious organizations

In future years, the district should continue to expand the reach of the communications strategy to reach other audiences and stakeholders.

Perform a Communications Vulnerability Assessment
It's very important that the district has a clear understanding of where it is likely to receive criticism from the media, the public, elected officials and others so that it is prepared to address them when the criticism occurs, or in some instances, before it happens.

Create Short and Long-Term Communications Milestone Calendars
Early on, the communications department should develop a calendar of significant announcements regarding key milestones, such as academic progress, infrastructure improvements, new partnerships, etc.

Establish Metrics for Success
For each communications undertaking, WCCUSD communications should develop metrics that define success and how the achievement of those metrics contribute to the overall success of WCCUSD initiatives. Examples of success metrics include:
- Social media engagement (likes, shares, clicks on embedded links)
- Ability to influence media stories
- Key audience engagement
- Ability to drive communications narrative
- Number of attendees for public events

The metrics should be attributable to communications activities but also have a meaningful relationship to wider District goals.

Establish Personal Relationships with Key Media Members
It is important that the Communications Director has a positive and meaningful relationship with the local media. Positive media relationships allow district personnel to be a resource to the media and to be able to learn and manage potentially negative information before it s released to the public. Important local media outlets include:
- The Contra Costa Times
- Various Patch publications

Content Mining
Every day there are ample stories from every school about special achievements and improvements; "wins" that are great content to share with key audiences. The communications department should make it a priority to survey each school for compelling stories that can be shared as social media announcements or even made into larger communications campaigns. The key to a robust communications program is the creation of compelling content, and schools are great sources. In addition, the district should consider repurposing materials designed for an internal audience into something for public consumption through social or other media. The district should then use the data gleaned from who likes/views/retweets/shares information to design future

communication activities. Finally, video and photo content (when available and where appropriate) will help to make communications more engaging for public audiences.

Examples of content to mine:

- Academic and/or extracurricular student success stories
- Athletic achievements
- Infrastructure improvements
- Teacher/principal training materials
- Field trips
- Academic events

Grow Online Presence

WCCUSD has done a good job of improving its online presence and it should continue to make online growth a top priority considering social media's exponential growth and influence with key audiences. In addition to tracking and improving the number of "likes," followers, and page views, the district should mine the data of those who engage with the district's social media sites to achieve district objectives. For example, consider matching the data from social media usage to the state voter file to encourage voter registration and participation in municipal elections and to identify community leaders and organizers who can help push for district priorities.

District website – The main district website (www.wccusd.net) was submitted to bigwebstats.com to perform a topline analysis of its build, usability and security. Their report can be accessed here: http://www.bigwebstats.com/site/wccusd.net. Throughout the report, there are recommendations for making improvements to make it more findable, usable and secure. Only someone with access to WCCUSD's site-specific analytics can accurately analyze the online traffic patterns, however there are some developing best practices that the district should consider to raise its web profile:

- Consider moving content to (or replicating it) on "microsites." People increasingly expect web information to be readily accessible when landing on a particular page. The more clicks a person has to perform, the more likely they are to leave the site before getting the information they need. They are also less likely to return in the future. Microsites are websites that serve a limited purpose or appeal to a specific audience. They frequently have very few pages and contain essential information. For example, the landing page for the "parent" section on the current website is used only for hosting small links to calendars while parents have to search a sidebar for more categories (that also include student information links). WCCUSD should create a parent microsite that features the most searched/clicked links on the landing page in order to make it easier for parents to navigate and give them a dedicated page to return to. Microsites also can be frequently updated and changed to meet evolving audience needs.
- Significantly increase the amount of multi-media on the WCCUSD website. Websites with pictures and videos attract much more attention and are more optimized in searches than text-dominated sites.

Facebook – Facebook is an important communications tool because it gives the district an opportunity to engage in two-way communication with its key audiences. However, in this medium, content is king and the district must work to engage current audiences and attract others in order to remain a regularly visited page. The people who manage the Facebook page have a wealth of information at their fingertips through the analytics function. It can tell the demographics of each visitor, times when most of their followers are online, what days are most effective for posting and which are least. WCCUSD has clearly invested time and resources in improving its Facebook presence but it is still a greatly underutilized tool:

- While the page has 700 "likes" it only has 2 people "talking about this." This signifies a very low engagement level by page viewers and is an indication that the posts lack compelling information.
- Past site activity shows periods of increased engagement but without corresponding increases in page likes.
- WCCUSD should increase its posting frequency and experiment with a number of different kinds of posts rather than the WCCUSD-specific, largely one-way messages of the last several months. Potential new posts include:
  - Images of teachers helping students accompanied by simple headlines;
  - Cross posts from other websites that introduce WCCUSD to additional audiences;
  - Calls to action on specific issues; and
  - Promoted posts and Facebook ads to broaden the audience and reach of the page.

In a district of 30,000 students and thousands of staff, WCCUSD's Facebook page should be a hub of activity and frequently visited by key audiences. Broadening the reach of the posts and varying the types and frequency of posts will help determine which messages are most effective.

Develop a Crisis Communications Plan
It is critical that the district have a written, understood, practiced and effective crisis communications plan that addresses every reasonable crisis scenario from natural disasters to extreme employee misconduct. WCCUSD should engage a communications firm to draft the plan and train district leaders on its use.

Quantitative and qualitative data are both required to accurately assess the Strategic Plan's effectiveness and progress. Quantitatively, the district should continue to track hard data on student outcomes and achievement, particularly API scores, high school graduation rates, third grade literacy rates, and attendance. Qualitatively, there are specific soft data points needed to gauge the progress of the cultural shift called for in the Strategic Plan. Below are the most critical of these cultural and behavioral metrics for each strategic plan priority and the method by which to gather the necessary data.

Priority	Metric	Method
Create High Expectations	Percentage of students in $5^{th} – 12^{th}$ grade who believe they can earn a college degree	Annual student survey
	Rate at which seniors are pursuing their #1 post-graduation goal	Annual student survey
Support Quality Instruction	Degree to which teachers believe they are stronger teachers this year than the year prior	Annual teacher survey
	Degree to which teachers and principals believe there is a strong professional learning community at their school	Annual teacher and principal surveys
	Degree to which students feel academically challenged and empowered in the classroom	Annual student survey
	Teacher retention rate	Standard count
Embrace Collective Ownership	Percentage of stakeholders who can articulate what role they play in providing a high quality education to the students of West County	Annual stakeholder survey
	Percentage of stakeholders who believe their actions directly and positively impact student success	Annual stakeholder survey

	Degree to which district leaders, school leaders, and parents believe outside stakeholder groups directly and positively impact student success	Annual district leadership, principal, and parent surveys
Invest in the Whole Child	Degree to which students, teachers and principals believe their school climate is safe, supportive, and fun	Annual student, teacher, and principal surveys
	Average number of out-of-school activities per year per student	Standard count
Transparency and Accountability	Degree to which all stakeholder groups feel they have a firm understanding of the district's priorities, efforts, and outcomes	Annual stakeholder survey
	Degree to which all stakeholder groups believe their voice is encouraged and heard within the district	Annual stakeholder survey
	Degree to which teachers, and district and school leaders believe they are able to make data-informed decisions efficiently	Annual district leadership, principals, and teacher surveys
Innovate	Percentage of teachers, principals, and district leaders who attempted a new approach to solve an existing problem	Annual teacher, principal, and district leadership surveys
	Degree to which teachers, principals, and district leaders believe they are able and encouraged to experiment, collaborate, and learn from each other's successes and failures	Annual teacher, principal, and district leadership surveys

All strategic initiatives face some degree of risk. Identifying and anticipating critical risks helps mitigate the downside and better position the district for long-term success. WCCUSD acknowledges the following critical risks:

- **Lack of Buy-In –** For the Strategic Plan to be effective, all stakeholders have to commit and genuinely believe the priorities and strategies are worthy, realistic, and designed to improve student outcomes.

- **Budget Cuts –** Though some of the strategies do not require substantial funding, many require financial support from the state, local municipalities, and private donors.

- **Priority Derailment –** The priorities identified in this document are grounded in extensive stakeholder input and data review and should therefore take precedence over other initiatives that may detract from the district's limited pool of resources.

- **Legacy Thinking –** Executing the Plan successfully will require stakeholders to abandon legacy thinking and embrace the reality that for WCCUSD to improve, old practices and habits that do not positively and substantially impact student learning need to be addressed and improved.

- **Mistreatment of Partners –** For WCCUSD to reach its potential, it will require the trust, dedication, and support of its nonprofit, business, and community partners.

- **Territorial Attitude –**The district and its partners must embrace collective ownership and recognize that positive student outcomes represent the success of all involved.

- **Inflexibility –** While the priorities should remain constant, individual tactics will require regular evaluation and modification to ensure effectiveness.

- **Overloaded and/or Unaligned Communication –** At all levels, internal district communication and communication among stakeholders must be aligned, purposeful and clear.

- **Over-Responding to Initial Setbacks –** Change and improvement take time, but it is essential that WCCUSD maintain direction and focus and not sacrifice long-term success in the face of short-term hurdles.

As the education landscape continues to evolve, WCCUSD will be presented with numerous opportunities not yet addressed within this Strategic Plan. The district should not disregard new opportunities, but rather evaluate each opportunity for alignment with the district's vision and key priorities in order to maintain focus and prioritize effectively. Listed below are the opportunities that will most likely present themselves and have the greatest potential to positively impact the district:

- **Blended Learning Models** – As class sizes throughout California continue to grow, innovative class management strategies offer an opportunity to increase student learning and alleviate added pressure on teachers without putting a substantial strain on the budget.

- **Revisit the Union Contracts** – The current union contracts (for teachers and classified employees) could be restructured to better align with the Strategic Plan priorities. For WCCUSD to become a "district of choice," all stakeholders – including the unions – will need to reexamine structures, roles, and systems, and improve methods to further facilitate positive student outcomes.

- **Expand Adult Education Programs** – Parent involvement is an essential component to a successful school district, but in WCCUSD, parent involvement is limited by adult education levels and language and cultural barriers. A robust adult education program is the district's best tool to help break down those barriers and create more involved and effective parent partners.

- **Clear the District's Annual Retirement Liability** – The existing $20,000,000 annual liability is a legal necessity, but a significant drain on an already-limited resource pool. The district needs to uphold its obligations, but should be open to ways to free up this capital and redirect the funds to mission-driven programs and personnel.

- **Use Case Studies to Build District's National Reputation** – With world renowned universities such as UC Berkeley, Stanford, and UC Davis all within close proximity to WCCUSD, the district should explore opportunities to partner with their education departments to write case studies that track the student and district improvements that emerge from the Strategic Plan. Building national recognition and prestige will help attract top talent and private donors.

- **Year-Round School** – Restructuring the school calendar to minimize dormant academic periods would eliminate summer learning loss and help students maintain positive academic momentum from one grade to the next.

West Contra Costa Unified School District

STRATEGIC PLAN

2013-2018

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